

Your petitioners humbly represent, that besides sewers' rates, payment of scavenging, and cleansing rates are made on account of most of the houses occupied by the labouring classes. That whilst their houses are badly drained, and the streets, in respect to which the owners or occupiers pay scavenging rates, are badly cleansed; and that, however the service of the scavenger may be contracted for, and paid for, the duty is rarely if ever properly done. Your petitioners beg leave to bring before your notice the evidence, in this respect, of the medical officers, given in answer to the inquiries made under the authority of the Government, and appended to the report on the sanitary condition of the labouring population."

We would gladly give the whole of Dr. Lynch's observations, but are prevented by our narrow limits. He said it was a subject of congratulation with every reflecting mind to see the working classes struggling to improve their social condition. It was one of the most gratifying results of the diffusion of useful knowledge, and one of the best signs of the times. That laudable endeavour had originated with their clear-headed brethren in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dundee, where public meetings were called and resolutions adopted, that showed how well they understood the evils and the means best calculated to remove them. The determination to form similar associations in each of the great towns of this country had met with encouragement from the highest, the noblest, the most pious, and some of the most scientific in the land. The wants of the poor, who were oppressed by the alterations, had been entirely overlooked in the new arrangements. That was a great evil, and had a strong tendency to aggravate all the evils arising from the neglect of proper sanitary regulations, and effecting the comforts and even the lives of the working classes to so extent that would appear quite incredible, if it was not for the searching and well-digested investigations of the Parliamentary commission for inquiring into the health of towns. Although every other class had been benefited by the march of science, no provision had been made for the benefit of the working classes. The result was, that one-half of the children born in Great Britain died before they reached five years of age; and taking the young and the old together, 26 years was the average at which people died in London, and 17 in Liverpool. 50,000 died annually of diseases, which might be prevented by proper precautions. It appeared, from indisputable calculations, that the class of artisans, instead of attaining the average, were cut off at 19, thus losing 15 years of existence, and including in that the loss of 15 years of productive labour to society. In the ward of Farringdon-without, the habitations of the poor were in the most deplorable condition. Behind the finest streets, with their magnificent plate-glass windows, displaying the most costly productions of the earth, was to be found a revolting mass of filth and misery, which it was impossible to describe. In Holborn they had Field-lane, and its shocking courts. On the other side they had Plumtree-court, with 600 inhabitants in 24 houses, the houses not averaging more than four rooms each; the rooms were but 8 feet in height and width, and the average of occupants was six persons in each room, while the inspector of prisons allowed a room of 10 feet to every individual prisoner. The houses in the court were built back to back, and the cellars, which contained an accumulation of every filth, were never cleared out. From these nests of pestilence were hourly issuing poisonous gases fatal to animal life. They need not but enter a newly-painted room to find how soon substances suspended in the air, imperceptibly entered and impregnated the fluids of the body. So fatal were the effects of the poison to which he alluded, that medical men were afraid of applying a blister to a patient, from the fear that it would run into a mortification. Similar close courts, in an equally bad state, were to be found off Fleet-street. In the Old Bailey there were nine courts, all without sewers. Contagious diseases were never absent. In Black Bear-alley, which was only two yards wide, and had but five houses, he had himself attended in one summer forty cases of typhus. By the census returns, the average in England and Wales was five persons to each house, but in John's-court, and Crown and Phoenix-court, West-street, he found in three-

roomed houses eighteen people to each house. In some of the dens, called lodging-houses, he had found six beds in a room, with two and three persons in each bed, at 3d. a-head. In Fetter-lane there were 2,000 inhabitants in 145 houses, and in Plough-court, in thirty houses, there was an excess of 400 over the healthy standard, and no sewer to mitigate the impurities. The number of occupants in a house might be taken as a good criterion of their circumstances. There were twice as many residents in the wretched hovels as in the better class of lanes, and it was exactly where it was most wanted that there was the greatest absence of every sanitary provision. Both physical and moral deterioration were the inevitable consequences of all that misery. That the morals of the people were contaminated by such means was undeniable. To mitigate the evils so inadequately described, they must in the first place provide a constant and unlimited supply of water to the poor. They must shut up the wretched hovels which generated disease, and appropriate some of their vast revenues to accommodate the poor with cheap, well-drained, and well-ventilated dwellings. Of the 125 who died daily in London, fewer than nine died of old age. The supply of water in London was a gross monopoly in the hands of a private company, and their charge was most exorbitant. Dr. Lynch here exhibited the prospectus of a company, with Lord Francis Egerton as chairman, and Mr. Baring and Mr. Jones Loyd as trustees, which was ready to furnish the metropolis with filtered water forty gallons per diem to each house, at the rate of 2d. a week, or 7s. a year. Amongst the many wise dispensations of Providence, there was none that more clearly indicated its Divine origin than the intimate connection which subsisted between our interest and our duty. Whatever was best calculated to promote the well-being of the human family, would be found to be the most economical in the end. On the contrary, whatever violated a sanitary law, or tended to produce suffering amongst any portion of the people would be found to operate injuriously upon the rest. Here was a bond of union between the different classes, which rendered it an act of common prudence as well as of humanity to observe the condition and provide for the comforts of those who stood lowest in the social scale. Ancient cities, once the envy of surrounding nations, had fallen because they did not secure their permanency by providing for the happiness and improvement of the masses. The interest of the labouring man ought to be an object of enduring interest with the members of that court. By labour the country had obtained within the last fifty years a mechanical power equal to the labour of 500,000,000 of human beings. London boasted to be the centre of civilization, the mighty heart of the political frame, whose size and wealth, whose pomp and commerce had gathered within its limits all that could contribute to the waste and pleasures of mankind. He referred to this picture of its greatness and glory, in order to contrast it with the deep disgrace of having such hovels as homes for the productive classes, in the very heart of the first city of the first empire of the world. He hoped, however, that they would now act a part more consistent with their honour—their having done so much for the ornamental, they would at length do something for the useful, and lay the foundation of a good work for which the press would praise them, the people would bless them, and their own consciences would reward them, as benefactors of the poor and the afflicted. Dr. Lynch concluded by moving that the petition be referred to the Improvement Committee.

Mr. Anderson seconded the motion.

Mr. King, with more bravery than good judgment, said he looked upon the appeal as ridiculous and nonsensical, and was determined for the sake of common sense to give it his most strenuous opposition.

Mr. Stevens evidently had the whole court with him when he replied to Mr. King with the remark, that it was important to the working classes that the court should at all events, manifest its sympathy with them. It had been intimated that the petition had a visionary object. When it was said that cleanliness could be produced, if the inmates of these wretched habitations were supplied with water, was that he would ask merely visionary? Was

it merely a visionary good, if the tottering and miserable hovels which abounded in the city were pulled down, and substituted by cottages, in which cleanliness could, according to the statement of Dr. Lynch, be supplied at so cheap a rate? Whatever the court might ultimately be able to do, it was at all events the duty of the court to treat such an appeal, not with sneers, but with respect and attention.

Mr. Stacy said it was allowed on all hands that an abundant supply of water, would effect a sort of revolution in the densely crowded lanes and alleys of the city. If the Commissioners of Sewers would begin by directing their labours amongst the inhabitants in supplying them with the one great necessity of health, the good example would be speedily followed, and all classes of the community would feel the blessing of the benefits.

Sir James Duke strongly supported the motion, which was ultimately agreed to by an immense majority.

We earnestly beseech every corporate body in the kingdom, to consider that the same petition and statement have been laid before them, and to give instant and earnest attention to the various points embraced by them. The question is of universal concern, and demands immediate attention.

#### REGENERATION OF THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES.

We have several times mentioned that a strong feeling of discontent prevails in this ancient and important society. While all around were active and energetic, the managing body of the Society of Antiquaries were apathetic and indifferent. Little has been done, the weekly meetings have become a reproach, and though more life is beginning to be exhibited by the executive, it is not sufficiently so to satisfy those members who have a just notion of what the society, with its long standing and great power, ought to do. On the 19th instant the general feeling was strongly shown, and it is to be hoped that the opinions which were expressed will produce a good result. The council had determined to create a new office of assistant secretary, with a salary of 150*l.* per annum, and had chosen Mr. Thoms to fill it. Mr. Pettigrew showed conclusively, so conclusively that not a word was said in support of the proposition, that such a step was directly contrary to the charter. He expressed his astonishment that the council and vice-presidents, at a moment when beyond all others the welfare of the society was most at stake, should have ventured on such a step. It was of the utmost importance that the society should have an officer of their own choice, and a man known abroad as well as at home. The subject was referred back to the council.

The Rev. Joseph Hunter said, all the difficulties at present existing in the society were owing to the mode in which the council were elected. They were not the council of the society, but were the representatives of a party unknown. Mr. H. ultimately moved that in future the secretary should not prepare any house list. An amendment was moved to the effect that the house list should be sent round to the members a short time before the day of election, and ultimately the further consideration of the subject was adjourned till the next meeting. Lord Northampton, Sir H. Ellis, Mr. Disney, Mr. C. Robinson, and others took part in the discussion. Mr. Amyot was in the chair.

Last Thursday evening, Lord Mahon, on taking the chair, communicated a letter from the Earl of Aberdeen, expressing a desire that the council should elect another president at the annual meeting. A vote of thanks to his lordship, moved by Mr. Pettigrew, and seconded by Mr. A. J. Kempe, was passed unanimously. Relative to the question on which the adjournment was moved, the chairman announced, that the council had determined on forwarding the house list to each fellow eight days before the election. Mr. Thoms explained, that his part in the preceding discussion was quite involuntary. Mr. Hall-stone, Mr. Lott, Mr. Tite, Mr. Taylor, and Mr. Hallam, besides the members above-named, addressed the meeting. Considerable excitement prevailed, and much credit is due to Lord Mahon for his able conduct in the chair.